



Sheila Dixon

Mayor,
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Mayor Dixon Signs Clean Indoor Air Act

Mayor Also Announces Availability of Free Nicotine Patches and Gum to Help City Residents Quit Smoking

Baltimore, MD (February 28, 2007) – Mayor Sheila Dixon signed the Baltimore City Clean Indoor Air Act into law today. Mayor Dixon also announced the city's Nicotine Replacement Therapy Initiative to aid residents who want to quit smoking. Baltimore is the largest city in Maryland with a comprehensive smoking ban.

"We're making Baltimore cleaner, greener, and healthier," said Mayor Dixon. "This important step will save lives and reduce illness among bar and restaurant workers and patrons."

The Clean Indoor Air Act prohibits smoking in almost public places in Baltimore. City Council Vice President Robert W. Curran, who introduced the bill nearly a year ago, partnered with Mayor Dixon to secure enough votes for the bill to pass. The new legislation will take effect on January 1, 2008.

"I am honored and excited to sign this bill," said Mayor Dixon. "With four prominent counties and the state's largest city leading the way, I hope the General Assembly will pass a state-wide smoking ban this year."

The city's Nicotine Replacement Therapy Initiative will begin on March 1, 2007. Through the initiative, qualified Baltimore City smokers who enroll in free telephone counseling through the state of Maryland's Quitline will be eligible to receive free nicotine patches or gum while supplies last. The Health Department is using \$100,000 in tobacco control funding to support this effort.

"It can very difficult to quit smoking," said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, the Baltimore City Health Commissioner. "We're pleased to partner with the state of Maryland to provide effective assistance to city residents who are taking this critical step to a healthier lifestyle."

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